

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Postmistress, a historical fiction novel written by American novelist Sarah Blake, first published on February 9th 2010. Published by Putnam/Amy Einhorn Books. The novel consists of 28 chapters and 336 pages. The book is set in Massachusetts and Europe and at the beginning of World War II. The plot follows three women, the local postmaster Iris, Frankie a radio reporter stationed in London and a young doctor's wife Emma .

The author of *The Postmistress* is Sarah Blake. She was born on December 10th 1960 and raised in New York City. Sarah Blake has a BA from Yale University and a PhD in English and American Literature from New York University. She is the author of a chapbook of poems, *Full Turn* (1989); an artist book, *Runaway Girls* 1997 in collaboration with the artist, Robin Kahn; and two novels. Her first novel, *Grange House* 2000 was named a "New and Noteworthy" paperback in August, 2001 by the New York Times. Her second novel, *The Postmistress*, was by Amy Einhorn Books/Putnam in February 2010. Her essays and reviews have appeared in Good Housekeeping, US News and World Reports, the Chicago Tribune and elsewhere. Sarah taught high school and college English for many years in Colorado and New York. She has taught fiction workshops at the Fine Arts Works Center in Provincetown, MA, The Writer's Center in

Bethesda, MD, the University of Maryland, and George Washington University. She lives in Washington, DC with her husband, the poet Joshua Weiner, and their two sons (<http://www.amazon.com/Sarah-Blake/e/B001HOIPR8>).

The Postmistress is an interesting novel. Many people give comments about this New York Bestselling novel whether they like it or do not. One of discussion media that spoke about this novel is GoodRead. There are three readers who accept and give good comment for this novel; they are Joan, Jenice and Georgia Herod. On April 3rd 2013 Joan said that “the first time she read it, she loved it”, while on March 1st 2012 uttered that “she loved it and the stories it told”, and Georgia Herod on February 2013 stated that “the novel is beautifully written by the writer” (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6578507-the-postmistress>).

The Postmistress also gets contra opinion from its readers. There are three person who did not enjoy this book they are: Randy, Stella Jones, and Kelley. Randy on May 6th 2013 said that “he felt like he had been finally and fully let down”, then Stella Jones on May 16th 2013 spoke that “she had a bit of difficulty with the characters because at the beginning, the author kept jumping from one place to another, one character to another” and Kelley in May 21st 2013 also stated that “I did not enjoy this book at all, which is odd” (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6578507-the-postmistress>).

The Postmistress is a good novel with an epic setting and historical story. This novel as a New York Times Bestseller and it also got a lot of good opinions

from the fiction historical lovers. *The Postmistress* is an elegant novel about the power of the human voice. This book leaves way too much to be desired. *The Postmistress* is a fascinating story of lives experience of three women whose experiences during the world II war become interconnected. The characters in this novel needed to stay professional to be taken seriously. By *The Postmistress*, Sarah Blake aims to appeal to the hearts of the readers with captivating story in War World II period.

The Postmistress is a tale of two worlds one shattered by violence, the other willfully naïve-and of two women whose job is to deliver the news, yet who find themselves unable to do so. Through their eyes, and the eyes of everyday people caught in history's tide, it examines how stories are told, and how the fact of war in everyday life. The story of the novel tells us about the loss of innocence of two extraordinary women-and of two countries torn apart by war. Two are strong personalities, working in roles often reserved for men, and enjoy the personal liberation that their work brings them. They are Iris James, the postmistress of Franklin, and Frankie Bard, an American reporter covering World War II and broadcasting regularly to Franklin as her voice crosses the ocean. In 1940, Iris James is the postmistress in coastal Franklin, Massachusetts. Iris knows more about the townspeople than she will ever say, and believes her job is to deliver secrets. One day she found a letter in her pocket, she read it, and cannot deliver it. Meanwhile, Frankie Bard broadcasts from overseas with Edward R.

Murrow. Most of the townspeople of Franklin think the war can't touch them. But both Iris and Frankie know better.

There are four reasons why the researcher is interested in studying this novel, first is to analyze the character and the characterization of the novel. Second is to examine the plot of the novel. Third is to investigate the language style of the novel. Fourth is because the professionalism reflected in the novel can influences this present condition.

The researcher uses the Feminist criticism as an approach to analyze this novel, because the novel relates to professionalism of woman resources during the war world II period reflected in Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress*. By so doing, the writer gives the title: **PROFESSIONALISM OF WOMAN RESOURCES IN SARAH BLAKE'S THE POSTMISTRESS (2010): A FEMINIST CRITICISM.**

B. Literature Review

The Postmistress is an interesting novel, and as far as the researcher knows that there is no such kind of research analyzing this novel whether in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Surakarta region. So it is the first research on this novel.

C. Problem Statement

The main problem of the study is how the professionalism of woman resources is reflected in Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress*.

D. Research Limitation

The researcher focus on this research is how the professionalism of woman resources is reflected in Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress* based on Feminist Criticism.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To examine the novel based on structural elements of Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress* by discovering character and characterization, setting, point of view, plot and theme.
- b. To examine the novel based on the feminist criticism.

F. Benefit of the Study

There are two benefits can be added as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is hoped to give a new contribution and information to the better body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *The Postmistress* novel by Sarah Blake.

2. Practical Benefit

This study is expected to help the researcher get deeper understanding about the novel and how to use literary criticism in analyzing the novel.

G. Theoretical Approach

In this research, the researcher uses feminist approach to analyze the novel. The writer focuses on analyzing the conflict of cultures that happens in *The postmistress*. There are some steps in analyzing the novel. Firstly, the researcher begins from the structural elements of the novel, consist of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, and theme. Secondly, the researcher

uses sociological approach. The previous technique will apply in the next to get the deeper understanding.

H. Research Method

In this study, the researcher uses qualitative research.

1. Object of the Study

The object of the study is professionalism of women resources reflected in *The Postmistress* by Sarah Blake

2. Type of the Study

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data sources are using literary data. It aims at analyzing novel using sociological approach. The steps to conduct this research are (a) determining the type of the study, (b) determining the object of the study, (c) determining data and data source, (d) determining technique of data collection, and (e) determining technique of data analysis.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

a. Primary data source

The primary data source in this research is the novel of Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress*. The data are taken from the dialogue, character's description, plot and all of the statements related to the problems.

b. Secondary data source

Secondary data are collected from other literatures, discussing about professionalism, women recourses, and other related source.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The method used for collecting data is the library research by collecting and selecting both the primary data and secondary data.

5. Technique of Data Analysis

The technique of analyzing data is descriptive. She wants to observe the struggle of the major character for life in Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress*. There are two analyses, structural and feminist analysis.

I. Paper Organization

This paper organization consists of six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction that consists of background, problem statement, literature review, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, limitation of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter two is underlying theory. The third is social historical background of the American society in the late of twentieth century. The fourth chapter deals with the structural analysis. The fifth chapter presents the feminist analysis, and chapter six is conclusion and suggestion.